

VEB meeting minutes
February 23, 2015 7:30 pm

In attendance: Doug Wehrle (DW), Tom Smith (TS), Paul Perreira (PP), Mayla Hsu (MH).

Permit applicant: Steven Chester (SC), Signs, Ink., on behalf of Franki's Grill, 7 Old Post Road.

DW began the discussion by remarking that improvements to this stretch of Old Post Road are sorely needed. The present awning is torn, faded, and sagging. The VEB first discussed the overhang of the awning being too deep (4 feet), which is much more than the adjacent awnings. The neighboring awnings are a residence (black) and a business (blue, Trinkets), and are no more than 2 feet in depth. Thus, 4 feet would protrude significantly in comparison. In addition, the proposed Franki's awning would be 12 inches deeper than the awnings at the Black Cow across the street. It appears that only businesses with retractable awning structures (such as The Tavern at Croton Landing) have awning depths in excess of 3 feet. A liability of a 4 foot deep awning is that the lettering on it will become angled, making it more difficult to read. The VEB also thinks it would be desirable to try for a coordinated look and façade upgrade (paint/clean?) for the building as a whole, particularly considering its prominent location at the center of the Upper Village. SC said that Franki plans to have seats and tables on the sidewalk, which will be shaded by the awning, and is quite insistent on this point.

TS asked whether it is necessary to have lettering in italics, which is distracting and less easy to read. Overall, the VEB likes the prominent name "Franki's Grill" but thinks the additional wording on the sign is overly competitive. The applicant should consider whether a list of some of the items across the bottom (e.g. hamburgers, gyros etc.) is really necessary. Also, if a phone number is to be included, it should be smaller and therefore less competitive with the business name. However, since take-out orders are an important part of the business, the VEB recognizes that display of the business phone number is significant. SC pointed out that he himself often calls ahead with an order to be picked up, suggesting that the phone number is important. There was discussion about moving the lettering around in order to maximize the "Franki's Grill" in the center, while modifying the other words. The VEB suggests non-italicized letters and reducing the size of the lettering around "Franki's Grill". Everyone concurred that the color of the awning (burgundy) is appropriate. SC agreed with many of these proposed modifications, and will consult with Franki.

Recommendations:

1. Reduce the awning depth to 36 inches, or provide for a deeper awning using a retractable system.
2. Work with the building owner to develop a coordinated façade improvement plan.

3. Consider revising the font from italic to non-italicized letters. Also consider reducing the size of the phone number and otherwise reducing the wording of the other text to make the sign cleaner and the business name more obvious.

The VEB next discussed the draft report on the visual environment that is in progress. It was decided to continue work, listing some of the points of interest in and around the Village that have not been discussed in previous reports.